

Friends of Ballard Park is dedicated to protecting, preserving and maintaining Newport's Only Nature Preserve. It's goals are to allow for the peaceful contemplation of nature for the local public, to provide a passive cultural, historical and educational resource, and to enhance the unique and exceptional aesthetic natural qualities of Ballard Park.

friends of ballard park

A nonprofit group known as the Friends of Ballard Park (FOB) was incorporated as a 501(3) c nonprofit organization in 1996 with a mission of protecting, preserving and maintaining Ballard Park, Newport's only nature preserve.

Preservation of Ballard Park is important because it helps to support a greater diversity of wildlife species by providing enough home-range area to support large animals like deer, mink, otter and raptors and provides a greater diversity of habitat which increases the suite of resources to wildlife in larger protected areas.

Keep up to date with Ballard Park happenings by logging onto www.ballardpark.org.

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ballard park

Ballard Park is a wild and natural open space of 13 acres located near the intersection of Hazard and Wickham Roads, directly across from Rogers High School in Newport, RI. The park was deeded as a gift to the City of Newport in 1990 by Carol C. Ballard. It has been designated by deed as an area to be used for conservation, education and passive recreation.

Its unique features include two 19th century quarries and a diverse variety of native and introduced plant species. Ballard Park forms part of a critical link between large tracts of permanently and temporarily protected open space in the Newport Neck area which include the abutting 54 acre wildlife refuge, 250 acre Brenton Point State Park and 180+ acre Newport Country Club.

WHILE ENJOYING BALLARD PARK PLEASE:

Stay on the trails
Carry out your trash
Keep dogs leashed
Beware of poison ivy & ticks

NOTE:

Rock Climbing is Not Allowed by City Ordinance

trail descriptions:

QUARRY RIM TRAIL: This steep trail leads from near the top of the quarry at the Twin Ledges Trail down to the Quarry Meadow at its southern end. Because it is located on the edge of a large rock face, care is required. Nonetheless, it does offer some great views into the quarry and of the Vernal Pond.

SOUTHWEST TRAIL: From the quarry meadow, this trail gradually rises following the old quarry road. To the north of the trail, a seasonal stream (2) flows during months of wet weather. Further along, the remnants of a structure that housed the quarry's stone crusher (Q) are located a few yards to the south of the General Hazard Overlook (3). This overlook offers a vista above the valley with great year-round views of the native vegetation. The trail becomes more rugged as it winds through an area whose understory is dominated by the shrub Summer sweet. The fragrance of these flowers fills the air for a few weeks in mid-Summer. The puddingstone boulder (4 - see Valley Trail) lies where this trail and the Valley Trail come together. The path becomes a little more challenging as it climbs the edge of the wooden quarry. The Joseph Cotton Overlook (5) offers superb panoramic views to the south and west, especially in Autumn.

SWAMP MAPLE TRAIL: This trail has two distinct environments. On the eastern (upland) end, a grove of native choke cherries are a sign that this area was used as a pasture in the not too distant past. Further along a boardwalk crosses over a trench (D) which was dug to help drain the pasture. The area gradually becomes dominated by the canopy trees, which are swamp maples. This native tree, with tiny red flowers in Spring and brilliant Fall color is a sure sign that the land here is wet. Boardwalks (B) help traverse this wetland where skunk cabbage grows in the Spring. At the western end of the trail there are many uprooted swamp maples (7) which were tipped during large storms.

TWIN LEDGES TRAIL: The Twin Ledges Trail is dominated by two large rock outcrops. The Fern Ledge (6) on the western end of the trail provides a unique habitat for a variety of ferns, lichens and moss. During the Winter, icicles hang along side this greenery in interesting compositions. The East Ledge (8) has a similar look, but with less vegetation. Atop this ledge is the Quarry Overlook (9) with spectacular views of the Quarry Meadow, Ocean Drive and Atlantic Ocean.

VALLEY TRAIL: This short path connects the middle of the Twin Ledge Trail to the Southwest Trail. At its northern end in May, the fragrance of lily-of-the-valley permeates the air where it grows on either side of the path along with ferns. Further along, a large evergreen near the trail is a yew. It is one of the many non-native species of plants in the park that may have been introduced by man or perhaps animal droppings. The puddingstone (4) boulder is located where the path comes closest to the Southwest Trail. Notice that this conglomerate stone is not at all like the granite on site. It is an example of anomaly that was deposited by the last glacier that retreated from the areas over 12,000 years ago.

quarry meadow:

The site of many special events hosted in the park, the three acre quarry meadow contains a mixture of grasses and wildflowers as well as a grove of quaking aspen (1) with silver leaves that shake in the wind. The half acre vernal pond is man-made and home to spring peepers, frogs and painted turtles in the summer. Granite was quarried this area from the early 1800's to the 1930's.

Ballard Park

Wickham Road * Newport, RI 02840 * www.ballardpark.org

